
NEWS RELEASE

Judd Gregg

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SENATOR GREGG PRESSES FOR CONTINUED PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY-SENSITIVE CONTINENTAL SHELF AREA

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) recently called on the leaders of the joint U.S. House of Representatives/U.S. Senate Energy Conference to maintain the current ban on future mineral leasing activities in areas of the Outer Continental Shelf. Senator Gregg joined several of his Senate colleagues in calling on the Chairmen of the Conference to remove a provision that would require the Secretary of the Interior to inventory potential sites for oil and gas drilling in the entire OCS, stating that the provision would, "seriously undermine current protections for these environmentally sensitive and economically important coastal and marine areas."

In a letter to Senator Pete Domenici (R-NM) and Congressman Billy Tauzin (R-LA), Senator Gregg and several other Senators stated, "A comprehensive inventory of Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas resources is inconsistent with the moratorium that currently exists in California, Florida and the Eastern Gulf of Mexico, Oregon, Washington, Bristol Bay, New England, and the entire Atlantic Coast. For more than 20 years, bipartisan legislative and administrative actions have enhanced protection of moratoria areas from offshore oil and gas development.

"In addition, an inventory is not needed. The Minerals Management Service already compiles estimates of OCS oil and gas resources every 5 years. In fact, the last one was completed in the year 2000 and includes estimates of undiscovered conventionally and economically recoverable oil and natural gas. Therefore, it appears that such a provision of this energy bill is duplicative and unnecessary.

"Tourism is a major industry for coastal states and is a critical part of coastal economies. We strongly urge you to protect our vital coastal communities by ensuring that provisions that would weaken the OCS moratorium on new drilling off our coasts are not included in the final Energy bill."

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